

Addressing the Behavioral Health Crisis: A Simpler Point-of-View



OVERVIEW

The Challenge

Behavioral health diagnoses have been rising for years, costing the global economy an estimated \$1 trillion annually. Patients struggle to obtain access to quality care at affordable prices.

The Process

Simpler applies Lean Agile concepts to design, develop, and deploy innovative solutions to improve access to quality behavioral health care providers, minimizing the time from the onset of a crisis to receipt of treatment.

The Result

For a specific client, Simpler reduced admissions from area emergency departments from 3 hours to 64 minutes. Reduced patient screening process from 2 hours to 40 minutes.

Increased client's capacity to see more than 1,000 additional patients annually.

Amidst the backdrop of a pandemic that has claimed more than 6 million lives, economic instability not seen in years, record-breaking inflation worldwide, and the grim prospect of a major war in Europe, it's no surprise that a behavioral health crisis has swept the globe.

Behavioral health has always been an issue, both in good times and bad, but until recently was generally exempt from public discourse, flying beneath our social radar due to stigmatization and fear. Today we know there are tens of millions of people who likely require help with existing conditions, and many experts predict widespread behavioral health issues brought on by the pandemic that will continue for years to come.

Behavioral health diagnoses have been rising for years, costing the global economy an estimated \$1 trillion annually, [according to Scientific American](#).

In addition to the traumatic emotional and financial impact that behavioral health can have on families, these conditions also increase time lost at work, reduce productivity and quality, and increase healthcare and insurance costs. In the US alone, depression causes more than 200 million lost workdays every year, [costing employers over \\$44 billion based on CDC estimates](#). Employees with unresolved depression also report a 35% reduction in productivity, which costs the US economy \$210 billion a year, according to the [American Psychiatric Association](#).

Behavioral health is a problem whose scale will require new and innovative solutions. Simpler is helping our clients design and create new solutions that have helped hundreds of thousands of their employees, members, and patients.

Who We Are

Simpler Consulting, an IBM Company, relentlessly pursues success for our clients. We are recognized worldwide as the premier authority on Lean Transformation and Lean Agile design in the healthcare industry, helping clients worldwide improve patient access, safety, quality, and provider productivity with the ultimate aim of improving population health and reducing per capita healthcare costs.

What we do

Behavioral health patients face extreme challenges obtaining access to quality care. Unlike traditional medical practices, in which the patient's primary care provider (PCP) acts as the navigator to treatments and specialists, behavioral health patients are forced to navigate the comparatively opaque and siloed domain of behavioral health services alone at a time when their cognitive skills are under significant duress. In recent Voice-of-Customer (VOC) interviews, patients have described the process of identifying an in-network behavioral health provider that is a "good fit" and has near-term availability as: "hellish and awful", "such a debacle", and "anxiety-inducing".

At Simpler, we apply Lean Agile concepts to design, develop, and deploy innovative solutions to improve access to quality behavioral health care providers, thereby minimizing the time from the onset of a crisis to receipt of treatment.

We help providers and staff create highly reliable standard work to enable evidence-based clinical best practices that result in better patient outcomes as the patient progresses in their wellness journey, and we work with clients across the entirety of the healthcare continuum – from payers to providers – to reduce total care costs for patients through the holistic integration of traditional medical and behavioral health care.

How we do it

At Rogers Behavioral Health, a Wisconsin-based health system providing specialty mental health and addiction services through a multi-state network of hospitals and residential and outpatient centers, surging demand for care highlighted operational inefficiencies and overburdened care providers. By working with Simpler, Rogers Behavioral Health streamlined its screening and administrative processes and deployed evidence-based treatment plans developed from industry best practices.

Results

Rogers Behavioral Health reduced its process for admissions from area emergency departments from 3 hours to 64 minutes and its patient screening process from 2 hours to 40 minutes. By evaluating its clinicians' treatment plans against fact-based benchmarks, Rogers saw its Clinical Global Impression -Improvement (CGI-I) increase to 82 percent of patients reporting much-to-very-much improvement. These improvements enabled Rogers care providers to see one thousand more patients per year than previously, while simultaneously decreasing employee turnover.

For more information on Simpler's Behavior Health Service Offerings, including process improvement and new product development opportunities, contact:



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John Rubio has over 30 years of leadership experience in the delivery of successful large-scale Lean transformations across a broad range of industries and companies including healthcare. John has held positions as a Corporate Continuous Improvement Manager with twenty-three site responsibilities, GM, Vice President of Operations and most recently Vice President of Healthcare Operations.



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Alan Talbot has over 30 years of international experience including leadership positions in manufacturing and health care organizations.

Alan has consulted to clients in healthcare, manufacturing, medical education and local government. His skills include Lean, Agile and management systems.



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Jeff Allbee has over 20 years of leadership experience in the delivery of successful lean transformations across a broad range of industries and companies. His industry segment experience includes healthcare, financial services, home building products, office furniture fabrication and assembly, and hand tool manufacturing.

Since joining Simpler, Jeff has coached and mentored several healthcare transformations at Saint Boniface Hospital, Blood Center of Wisconsin, Desert Sage Health Centers, All-Saints Hospital, Presence Health, SSM Health and Emory University Hospitals.



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